

Daily Bible Study Commentary by Pastor Steve

We're excited to have you digging deeper into the Word. The best way to use this study guide is to read the Bible verse(s) first, then Pastor Steve's commentary. God bless you.

John 12:47-50

vs47-48: Because Jesus is the direct revelation of God, to disobey His commands is to disobey the Father, and to reject Him is to reject the Father. That's why Jesus, during those final days of His earthly ministry, issued a warning of His own. The Pharisees had threatened to expel from the synagogue anyone who confessed Him, so He "cried out" (v44) a warning to all who would listen. He said the decisions people were making to reject or deny Him would be recorded in heaven and presented as evidence against them at the final judgment. **vs49-50:** John closes his description of Jesus' public ministry by quoting this statement from Jesus: "I did not speak from Myself, but My Father, the One having sent Me, He has given Me commandment [of] what I may say and what I may speak. And I have seen that His commandment is eternal life. Therefore I speak things just as the Father has said them to Me. This is the way I speak" (literal). Throughout His ministry Jesus had carefully responded to the Father's initiative, and the result was that people encountered the Father when they encountered Him. So when someone rejected Him, that response revealed that they didn't really love God, and when someone received Him, that response revealed that they did love God, or at least were seeking to know the truth about Him. Jesus said He had been sent so people could receive eternal life, but He warned that His presence had also produced judgment.

John 13:1

v1: Passover that year began on Thursday evening. The other gospels record that preparations for the celebration were made earlier in the day (Mt 26:17-19; Mk 14:12-16; Lk 22:3-6). A furnished upper room had been secretly secured by Jesus (Mk 14:13-16; Lk 22:8-13). He had sent Peter and John ahead to prepare the room and the meal. A lamb had to be purchased, presented to the priests in the temple for inspection, slaughtered there and then taken back to the house to be cooked. Unleavened bread, wine, bitter herbs and other elements used in the feast were also purchased. While Peter and John were busy doing these things, Jesus and the rest of the disciples spent the day elsewhere. Jesus deliberately hid from them the location of the meeting site so that Judas Iscariot could not report their location to the priests until after the meal had been eaten and Jesus had been able to present His final teachings and pray for them (Jn 13-17).

John 13:1-5

vs1-5: On that final evening in the upper room Jesus modeled an attitude which belongs in the heart of every true disciple: a love for God and others which is so strong it causes us to cast aside our desire for honor and gladly take the lowliest place of service. Before the Passover meal was served Jesus picked up a towel and washbasin, knelt down and then one by one washed the sweat and dust off His disciples' feet. His humility was shocking; it felt inappropriate; it made everyone uncomfortable. The man many in Israel believed was the Messiah, the man with such power He could still a storm and raise dead people to life, the man so skilled in His knowledge of the Scriptures He could silence the nation's most senior religious leaders, the man who couldn't step into a public place without thousands rushing to hear Him and trying to touch His cloak, did what a household servant would normally have done: He washed their dusty feet.

John 13:1

v1: John actually lets us know what Jesus was thinking before He did this. First he says Jesus knew that "His hour had come" (v1). That means Jesus was fully aware, not only of God's plan, but of His time table. He knew He would be arrested that night and executed the next day, which makes His actions that evening all the more amazing. Rather than withdrawing to a solitary place so He could prepare Himself for what was to come, He spent most of that evening caring for His disciples. That selflessness is what John is pointing to when he says, "He loved His own who were in the world. He loved them to the end" (v1). Jesus carefully arranged to have those final hours undisturbed so that He could serve His disciples Passover and explain the bread and cup (1Co 11:23-26). He wanted to prepare them for His departure. He wanted to talk to them about heaven, the Holy Spirit, peace, fruitfulness, persecution, His return and their new authority in prayer (Jn 13-16). And He wanted them to hear Him pray for them (Jn 17). Knowing that He was about to die, Jesus didn't think about Himself. He thought about them.

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John 13:1-3

v1-3 (continued): The second thing John says Jesus knew before He washed His disciples' feet was where He would go after He died. He said Jesus knew "He would pass over, out of this world to the Father" (literal) (v1). In other words, He would return to His place of honor in heaven beside the Father. As shameful as the cross might be, glory and honor awaited Him on the other side. The third thing John mentions is that Judas had already decided to betray Jesus. John describes it as, "...the devil having now cast into [his] heart that he should give Him over" (literal) (v2). He doesn't specifically say that Jesus knew this about Judas, but it soon becomes quite evident He did (Jn 13:18, 21, 26). The fourth thing John mentions is that Jesus knew "that the Father gave all things into His hands" (literal) (v3). That statement assures us that Jesus was no victim. He voluntarily gave His life for us. The Father had already given Him complete authority to act as He willed. Jesus could have escaped the cross at any moment (Mt 26:53), but He freely chose to endure it.

John 13:3-5

v3: And the fifth and final thing John mentions is that Jesus knew "He came out from God" and would go "back to God" (literal). That means He fully understood that He was God's divine Son who had been sent by the Father to earth, and that after His death and resurrection He would return to the glories of heaven. His identity and His future were secure. **vs4-5**: Jesus' greatness did not prevent Him from serving others, in fact, it allowed Him to do the lowliest job with no loss of dignity. John says, "He rose up from the meal and put His outer cloak [aside], and taking a linen cloth He wrapped it tightly around Himself. Then He put water into the basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and wipe off [the water] with the linen cloth with which He had wrapped Himself" (literal). As Jesus will soon explain (vs7-10) His act was a symbolic way of declaring that He will continue to wash away those sins which occur as believers go through the temptations and struggles of daily life.

John 13:4-5

vs4-5 (continued): Every believer must first experience an initial washing, which Jesus will soon refer to as a "bath" (v10). This is the cleansing of our sins which takes place when someone receives the righteousness of faith (Ro 4:3-5). But thereafter as mistakes or bad choices are made, we need another kind of washing. We need forgiveness for specific sins. This is what Jesus was modeling by washing His disciples' feet. He was declaring that He would be our Advocate before the Father (1Jn 1:8-2:2). Later on He explained that He was also giving them an example to follow (v15). He wanted them to selflessly serve one another. Since by washing His disciples' feet, Jesus primarily symbolized His ongoing forgiveness of our sins, we may assume that His command to wash one another's feet includes repeatedly forgiving each other (Mt 18:21-22, 35), as well as restoring those who sin (Gal 6:1-2).

John 13:6-8

vs6-8: When Jesus knelt down in front of Peter, Peter recoiled. His respect for Jesus simply would not allow him to participate in what was happening. He exclaimed, "Lord, do You wash my feet!," meaning, "No! I can't permit this." Jesus assured him that His actions were symbolic, and their spiritual meaning would become evident in the future. One would have hoped that Peter would have accepted that explanation and humbly submitted to the process, but instead he refused to believe that Jesus knew what He was doing. He defied Him by saying, "Never shall You wash my feet, [not] into the [coming Messianic] age!" (literal), to which Jesus quickly replied, using language just as aggressive as Peter's, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with Me" (literal), meaning, "If I don't do this you won't belong to Me, and you'll perish when you die!"